

# **LEQUE ISLAND ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS PROJECT**

## **PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2**

**FEBRUARY 25, 2015**

**6:30 to 8:30 pm**

**Stanwood Middle School**

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Loren Brokaw, WDFW, welcomed participants to the meeting and introduced the project team. He then introduced facilitator Hilary Wilkinson, Veda Environmental, who reviewed the evening's agenda and the meeting's purpose: to provide an opportunity for the public to understand the current status of the Leque Island Alternatives Analysis Project and to weigh in on key questions.

Loren provided a brief presentation that provided more information regarding the project. Highlights include:

- Project purpose – current configuration of Leque Island dikes is not sustainable. Project is intended to address repeated dike failures that have forced expensive, temporary repairs, including most recently in 2010. This project will assess benefits, drawbacks, and constraints of a suite of design alternatives while considering habitat and recreation needs.
- Description of additional drivers, including permit requirements, availability of funding, etc.
- Project timeline
- Overview of design alternatives, including
  - No restoration
  - Do nothing
  - Levee breach
  - Setback dike
  - Training dike
- Next steps
  - Evaluate input from meeting
  - Meet with tribal co-managers
  - Finalize alternatives analysis document
  - Make recommendation to Olympia staff
  - Select alternative
  - Advance to next phase of design and permitting
  - Secure construction funding. Earliest that construction will occur: 2017

Hilary provided an overview of the stakeholder input process and highlighted key input to date, including how it was incorporated. Presentation highlights include:

- Three meetings between Jan 2014 and Jan 2015; volunteers solicited through a survey
- 30 committee members total representing a range of interests (duck and pheasant hunters; photographers; wildlife viewers and others)
- Numerous entities represented, including not-for profits, special districts, government, committees and planning groups, and citizens.
- Committee meetings served to 1) educate/update participants regarding status of project, including technical work being completed, and 2) solicit targeted input at key junctures.
- Three key steps in terms of committee input:
  - *Values and vision exercise*, whereby participants were asked to share what they value about Leque Island currently, and what they would like to see at Leque Island in the future. Public access, recreation, habitat for migrating birds and habitat, and outdoor educational opportunities continually rated high in terms of committee members' values.
  - *Integrate values/vision into screening criteria*. Committee input regarding values and vision were used to build the screening criteria (which in turn will be used to evaluate the different alternatives).
  - *Committee ranking of alternatives*. Committee members weighed in on the different alternatives and ranked them.

### Summary of questions/comments

- Does DFW have a preferred alternative? *Response*: No, WDFW will select the preferred design alternative in May. One of the purposes of this meeting is to collect input to aid in the selection of the preferred alternative.
- Concern expressed regarding possibility of saltwater intrusion into aquifer if dikes are removed
- A local landowner expressed concern regarding public access to site – specifically, public wandering onto private property.

### Breakout session

Participants were invited to visit six different stations to get additional information and provide input on six key aspects of the project. Station titles and a summary of input received and questions raised follows.

#### Table 1 – Public use/infrastructure

Participants had an opportunity to learn more about how the project team expects public use and infrastructure to change in each of the 6 design alternatives.

#### *Summary of input/questions:*

- Strong desire expressed regarding replacement lands for pheasant hunting

- Concern that decision has already been made. Note: The decision will not be made until May.
- A handful of questions were asked about how the different alternatives will impact infrastructure.
- One participant, a former planner, suggested looking at the possibility of partnering with a land trust in terms of trying to protect recreational access.

### **Table 2 – Fish and Wildlife**

Participants had an opportunity to learn more about how the project team expects fish and wildlife habitat to change in each of the 6 design alternatives.

#### *Summary of input/questions:*

- Visitors to this table were primarily a mix of duck hunters, pheasant hunters, and birdwatchers.
- No visitors to this station had strong objections to any of the restoration options.
- No visitors to the station were supportive of status quo; all visitors assumed that full dike repair is not going to happen.
- Strong preference for continued ability to birdwatch.
- Duck hunters and pheasant hunters (most of whom also fish) expressed concern regarding what they view as an erosion of hunting access in W WA. Leque represents another cut to them. Concern boils down to: DFW will pursue “low hanging fruit” projects, but fish won’t be recovered and hunting access will not exist.

### **Table 3 – Modeling efforts**

Participants had an opportunity to learn more about the results of the hydrodynamic modeling analysis that was conducted so that the project team could better understand how each of the six alternatives would impact salinity, water depth, velocity and bed shear at Leque Island. This in turn will help in the selection of a preferred alternative.

#### *Summary of input/questions:*

- A landowner to the west of Davis Slough expressed concern regarding wave erosion and drainage impacts to his property.

### **Table 4 – Screening Criteria**

Participants had an opportunity to learn more about the screening criteria used in the selection of a preferred alternative.

#### *Summary of input/questions:*

- Strong expression of value for upland habitat.

### **Table 5 - Stakeholder Engagement**

Participants had an opportunity to learn more about the stakeholder engagement process, and could interact directly with members of the stakeholder committee to hear more about what input they provided that helped shape the project.

#### *Summary of input/questions:*

- Most visitors were from the Juniper Beach Water District, who wanted to make sure that the project team was aware of their strong concern regarding the possibility of saltwater intrusion into the aquifer if dikes are removed.
- One station visitor was a farmer who asked if agricultural interests were represented on the stakeholder committee. Expressed concern regarding more waterfowl visiting the property if restoration occurs, and potential impacts to nearby farms.

**Table 6 –City of Stanwood – Ovenell property project**

Participants had an opportunity to learn more about the City of Stanwood plans and recreation options at the Ovenell property. Note: handouts/sign-in sheets only.